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San Bruno Mayor Demands Strong PG&E Penalty, Reforms for Safer Pipeline System in Final Comments to CPUC

Commission Expected to Vote Today on Historic PG&E Penalty for Fatal 2010 San Bruno Pipeline Explosion, Culminating 4.5-Year Regulatory Proceeding

San Francisco, Calif. – In comments before the California Public Utilities Commission, San Bruno Mayor Jim Ruane this morning called on the CPUC to uphold a historic Pacific Gas & Electric Co. penalty and fine proposed by CPUC President Michael Picker – and implement additional safety measures critical to creating a legacy of safety and preventing future utility disasters.

Mayor Jim Ruane's comments in full:

"I stand before you today because the gross misconduct of the Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and lax oversight of this Commission caused a gas pipeline to explode and the resulting fire to rip through the heart of our city in 2010 – stealing the lives of eight innocent citizens and destroying a community.

San Bruno has spent four and a half difficult years pursuing truth, justice and accountability in the memory of those we lost and those who were grievously injured. It has not been an easy

process, and we have uncovered many painful truths about PG&E, the CPUC and their leadership along the way.

Near the end of this long journey, we ask this Commission to consider four points as it makes its final decision about PG&E's fines, remedies and penalties:

1. This explosion was a preventable disaster that resulted from faulty record keeping, negligent CPUC oversight and a broken CPUC regulatory culture that looked the other way as PG&E prioritized profits over public safety.
2. San Bruno's tireless and relentless effort in uncovering this malfeasance —and ultimately political corruption—that led to the tragic explosion was the driving force that got us here today. The diligent reporting of the news media and support from state and national elected leaders helped keep the spotlight on PG&E and the CPUC. The NTSB found a "cozy relationship," and we sought to prove that assertion beyond a reasonable doubt. These are the only reasons the corrupt relationship between PG&E and the CPUC came to light. It is the desire of San Bruno, as well as every citizen in our State, that CPUC regulators be honest and transparent, and that our utility provider, PG&E, operate as a safe, reliable and fairly priced monopoly. We ask for nothing more.

Four and half years later, this is not entirely what we see. Today, PG&E will be severely punished, but this Commission must also truly take responsibility, admit its role in this tragedy and commit to wholesale reforms. All of you assumed your positions after September 2010, but that does not in any way excuse a failure to bring transparency and reform to this body.

3. Hope springs eternal and change is always possible. However, while we have publicly stated our support for the proposed \$1.6 billion PGE penalty, we are disappointed that the decisions before you do not include two critical remedies – an Independent Monitor and a Pipeline Safety Trust – that are essential to addressing the failures of this Commission to do its job for California and the public.
New faces on the Commission and in the executive leadership within the agency will not, by themselves, guarantee urgently needed safety reforms. The establishment of these remedies is essential to providing the formal, third-party oversight needed to guarantee a going-forward legacy of safety at both PG&E and the CPUC. It's time for sweeping and lasting change at the CPUC. We are not conceding this issue today and, should you fail to act, we will continue to pursue it with the United States Attorney, the Attorney General and the Legislature of this state.
4. Finally, as I noted earlier, San Bruno has been the driving force in these proceedings before the CPUC – a fact that is clearly acknowledged in all of the proposed decisions before you today. San Bruno is unlike any intervenor to appear before this Commission and, God willing, unlike any to appear in the future.

Today, we ask this Commission not to adopt that portion of President Picker's Decision Different denying equitable reimbursement to San Bruno for the approximately 2 million dollars it expended in legal fees.

We ask this, not only because San Bruno's contributions are widely credited, but because it is the right thing to do. San Bruno did not "choose" to participate in these proceedings. After our city was blown up and eight souls perished at the hands of corporate negligence and regulatory corruption, is it even possible to imagine that the city's leadership could sit on its hands and allow nearly five years of proceedings to take place in its absence? There should really be no question that we had to participate in this process, we were invited to participate, and we deserve to be reimbursed by the CPUC as an intervener.

In summary, we ask that the CPUC approve the historic, 1.6 billion dollar penalty recommendation. We call on you to consider additional safety reforms to restore the public's broken trust in PG&E and the CPUC's going-forward performance. And, we ask that you reimburse San Bruno for the 2 million dollars we have expended in our tireless fight for a better, safer system.

Finally, we call on PG&E's leadership to put an end to this long and painful process by accepting the CPUC's final judgment. To CEO Tony Earley I say: Do not drag this decision through endless appeals. Take responsibility and do what is right, just and fair so that what happened in San Bruno never happens again, anywhere.

Thank you."

The CPUC is expected to vote on PG&E's penalties and fines for its role in the 2010 pipeline explosion in San Bruno. This vote culminates a four and a half year process to investigate PG&E and penalize the state's largest utility for its role in the fatal tragedy. The Commission is expected to approve one of two proposed PG&E penalties, fines and remedies, including a \$1.6 billion recommendation by CPUC President Michael Picker and a \$1.4 billion recommendation by the CPUC's administrative law judges. The city has also called for additional safety remedies, including an Independent Monitor and Pipeline Safety Trust, to provide needed oversight and further protect the public from future pipeline disasters.

To watch live video of the CPUC Commission meeting, click [here](#).